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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
The Farm Security Administration
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Cooperating

SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR CONDITIONS IN TODD COUNTY, KENTUCKY

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and
Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Washington, D. C.
November 1937

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This publication is one of a series of 11 with similar titles by Tom Vasey and Josiah C. Folsom. The reports are based on surveys made in the late summer and early autumn of 1936 of the economic and social conditions of adult agricultural laborers. The counties studied represent various types of farming in different parts of the United States, as follows:

<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Type of Farming</u>
California	Placer	Fruit
Colorado	Archuleta	Stock-ranch
Illinois	Livingston	Corn
Iowa	Hamilton	Corn-Hog
Kansas	Pawnee	Winter wheat
Kentucky	Todd	Tobacco
Louisiana	Concordia Parish	Cotton (eastern)
Minnesota	Lac qui Parle	Small grain
Pennsylvania	Wayne	Dairy
Tennessee	Fentress	Self-sufficing
Texas	Karnes	Cotton (western)

SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR CONDITIONS IN TODD COUNTY, KENTUCKY

By Tom Vasey, Farm Security Administration
and
Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

During the summer and fall of 1936, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Social Research Section of the Farm Security Administration, /1 on funds supplied by the Works Progress Administration, conducted a series of studies relative to agricultural labor conditions existent in the United States today. Todd County, Kentucky, was one of the 11 counties in as many States chosen for intensive research.

The hired farm laborers and their employers were canvassed by enumerators who filled out schedules with information drawn from each group. The data secured from the laborers were rather complete. In addition to noting general characteristics such as age, sex, education, etc., the enumerators inquired concerning incomes for the previous year, job descriptions, wage rates, work histories for the 12 months previous, and participation in community affairs. The farm operators employing these laborers were asked concerning wage rates, fluctuations in numbers of employees, and methods of obtaining labor. /2

The enumerators were instructed to use the limited time available for reaching, as nearly as possible, all the farms in the county that were hiring labor. Certain classifications -- country estates, livestock dealers, institutions, feed lots, boarding and lodging places, and unclassified farms -- were excepted, however, as they were not primarily dependent on agriculture as a source of income. As to the laborers, the enumerators were instructed to interview "only those hired to do the work of adults at adult wages." This policy eliminated all unpaid family labor and any child labor receiving wage rates below those of adults. "Hired labor" or "employees," as the terms are used here, designate individuals working for and dependent on wages paid by the farm operator but determined without regard to the income derived from the crop. In this study the tenure status of the operator was not considered.

/1 The Resettlement Administration, prior to September 1, 1937.

/2 The work was directed by representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture. The officials of the Experiment Station and the University of Kentucky gave advice concerning the study and cooperated in obtaining the enumerators, Charles Wallace of Calvert City, Russell Daulton of Morehead, and Alvin Cox of Lexington.

Todd County, in western Kentucky, lies partly in the Western Coal Fields area and partly in the Pennyroyal area. In the northern part of the county self-sufficing farming and mining predominate. The southern, or Pennyroyal, portion is the better agricultural part, comprising land that is second only to that of the Blue Grass area in favorable topography and fertility. In this half of the county, where general farming predominates, hay and corn are commonly produced; but there is also a heavy reliance on tobacco for cash income.

During the survey, which lasted from August 24 to September 12, 1936, the cutting of tobacco was under way but little labor was being used in the corn or hay fields. Numerous farms in the locality hire no labor at any time, and others do so only occasionally. Many of the 2,217 farms which were enumerated in the 1935 Census were visited in the course of this study. Schedules were obtained from 105 operators who were employing labor at the time, and data were secured from 296 of their 317 hired laborers. This report is based on the information thus gathered.

General Characteristics

With one exception, all of the workers interviewed were male. More Negroes than whites were found in the fields, the schedules taken from the 223 Negroes outnumbering those taken from whites 3 to 1. Racial differences are noticeable both in age distribution and in education. The average white worker was 3 years younger than the Negro, 3 out of every 10 colored workers being over 40 years old. Nearly two-thirds of the white laborers were under 30 years of age but only 40 percent of the Negroes were so young. Although only 19 percent of the whites were between 30 and 50 years of age, 45 percent of the Negroes were in this group (Table 1). The differences in age distribution of white and Negro farm laborers in this sample are similar to those found for the State of Kentucky by the Census of 1930. /3 Apparently agricultural labor serves as a stepping stone to farm tenancy or ownership for many of the whites but as a permanent occupation for most of the Negroes.

The Negro workers of all ages showed less schooling than the whites (Table 1); over half had not gone beyond the fourth grade, whereas only one-third of the whites had failed to go further. Few persons in either group had gone beyond the elementary grades, and a relatively small number had completed the eighth grade. On the whole the schooling of the farm laborers in Kentucky does not compare favorably with that reported by the laborers in the Northern States, but it does reach a higher level here than in the other Southern States of the survey.

/3 Calculated from data furnished to the U. S. Department of Agriculture by the Bureau of the Census.

Table 1.- Age and education of 296 agricultural laborers, by race, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Age	Grades completed									
	Total	0 - 4		5 - 7		8		9 or over		
	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	White: Negro:	
15	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
16	3	2	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	-
17	3	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
18	2	7	-	3	1	3	-	1	1	-
19	5	4	3	2	-	1	-	1	2	-
20 - 29	34 <u>/1</u>	78	13	31	9	28	7 <u>/1</u>	13	5	6
30 - 39	9	63	5	35	1	24	2	3	1	1
40 - 49	5	38	2	30	2	6	1	1	-	1
50 - 59	10	17	3	12	2	4	4	1	1	-
60 - 69	2	9	-	5	1	3	-	1	1	-
70 - 79	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
80 - 89	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	73 <u>/1</u>	223	27	123	20	71	15 <u>/1</u>	21	11	8

/1 Includes 1 female; all others male.

A larger proportion of the Negroes than of the whites were or had been married, but this difference was probably due chiefly to the difference in age distribution (Table 2). A higher percentage of Negroes than of whites were heads of families, but among those reporting dependents (Table 3) the white workers averaged slightly more than the Negroes, 3.4 as against 3.3. Among the Negroes the number of cases decreased fairly consistently as the number of dependents increased, but among the whites, families of 3 -- that is, with 2 dependents -- were most frequently reported. Among the white families, those with only 1 dependent were but half as numerous as those with 2 dependents.

In contrast to many agricultural localities, Todd County has a decidedly stable farm-labor population. With one exception, all those interviewed were natives either of Kentucky or of Tennessee, which borders directly on the agricultural portion of Todd County (Table 4); but in spite of the proximity of this neighboring State only 15 percent were born there. Only 19 persons, or 6 percent, reported that they had left Kentucky since 1930 to seek work. Even though employment may be highly intermittent, these laborers usually remain where they are, accepting whatever may be available in the way of jobs and levels of living.

Table 2.- Marital status of 296 agricultural laborers, by age and race, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Age	Total		Unmarried		Married		Widowed, separated, divorced	
	White		White		White		White	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
10 - 19	13	15	12	15	1	-	-	-
20 - 29	34 <u>/1</u>	78	13	37	17	36	4 <u>/1</u>	5
30 - 39	9	63	1	6	7	46	1	11
40 - 49	5	38	-	4	5	27	-	7
50 - 59	10	17	2	2	8	12	-	3
60 - 69	2	9	-	1	2	4	-	4
70 - 79	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	1
80 - 89	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Totals	73 <u>/1</u>	223	28	65	40	126	5 <u>/1</u>	32

/1 One female; all others male.

Table 3.- Dependents of hired farm laborers, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Number of dependents	White		Negro	
	Number		Number	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0	30	41.1	77	34.6
1	7	9.6	39	17.5
2	13	17.8	27	12.1
3	6	8.2	29	13.0
4	7	9.6	16	7.2
5	4	5.5	10	4.5
6	3	4.1	9	4.0
7	-	-	9	4.0
8 or more	3	4.1	7	3.1
Totals	73	100.0	223	100.0

Table 4.- Nativity and residence of 296 agricultural laborers, by race, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

State	White				Negro			
	Nativity		Residence		Nativity		Residence	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Kentucky	58	79.4	66 <u>/1</u>	90.4	191	85.7	208	93.3
Tennessee	14 <u>/1</u>	19.2	7	9.6	31	13.9	14	6.3
Missouri	1	1.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indiana	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	.4
Not reported	-	-	-	-	1	.4	-	-
Totals	73 <u>/1</u>	100.0	73 <u>/1</u>	100.0	223	100.0	223	100.0

/1 Includes 1 female; all others male.

Tenure Experience

The shift from cropper to laborer and back again is not an infrequent occurrence in Todd County. Over 40 percent of the hired farm laborers were or had been sharecroppers (Table 5). General discouragement caused them to try first one status and then another (Table 6). Well over one-half of those who had been sharecroppers, 55 percent of the Negroes and 86 percent of the whites, had made crops sometime during the past 6 years; and 22 Negro and 8 white laborers still had their own crops at the time they were interviewed as hired men. A great many of the workers gained a livelihood by alternately hiring out and cropping. In addition to sharecropping, a few have tried farming as renters or owners (Table 5).

Table 5.- Previous farm operation experience of 296 agricultural laborers, by race, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Experience	Totals		White		Negro	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	156	52.7	36 /1	49.3	120	53.8
Sharecropper	123	41.5	26	35.6	97	43.5
Sharecropper and tenant	7	2.4	5	6.8	2	.9
Owner and sharecropper	4	1.4	1	1.4	3	1.3
Owner	3	1.0	3	4.1	-	-
Tenant	2	.7	1	1.4	1	.5
Owner, tenant and sharecropper	1	.3	1	1.4	-	-
Totals	296	100.0	73 /1	100.0	223	100.0

/1 Includes 1 female; all others males.

Table 6.- Reason for termination of sharecropping status among white and Negro agricultural laborers and sharecroppers working out, Todd County, Kentucky

Reason	Negroes		Whites	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No profits or not able to make a living	31	31.7	8	26.7
Try something else, better job	20	20.4	8	26.7
Loss of crop	6	6.1	-	-
Could not find place	4	4.1	2	6.6
Crop reduction program	2	2.0	-	-
Miscellaneous	13	13.3	4	13.3
Not yet ended	22	22.4	8	26.7
Total	98	100.0	30	100.0

Income

The total cash income reported for the period September 1935 through August 1936 ranged from mere maintenance to \$725 (Table 7). However, 44 percent of the reports ranged from \$150 to \$250, and less than one-fourth were above the latter figure. One-third of the workers had received less than \$150 for the twelve months preceding September 1936.

The primary difference between the races was not so much in the average amounts as in the proportion receiving certain specified sums; nearly one-half of the incomes reported by Negroes ranged from \$150 to \$250, but only slightly more than one-third of those listed by the whites fell in this group. A somewhat higher percentage of whites than of Negroes reported earnings above \$250, but because of the number of Negroes earning the higher incomes, their average was \$191, while that for the whites was \$184.

Distribution of the source of income showed slight racial differences. A smaller percentage of the amounts earned by Negroes came from nonagricultural work. However, among Negroes a larger number of dependents reported nonagricultural earnings, chiefly because of the domestic-service jobs held by the Negro women. A high percentage of these earnings came from such jobs although the data gathered do not permit an exact calculation. Nonagricultural earnings of the laborers themselves came from a variety of sources -- work in tobacco sheds, road work, and odd jobs in town.

Relief played a decidedly minor role in the income of these workers. Seven cases of work relief and 6 cases of direct relief were reported, and they generally involved rather small sums. Only 2 were reported with more than \$100, 1 by a Negro who received \$200 in 10 months of Works Progress Administration work, and the other by a white worker who earned \$210 in the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Analysis of the very low cash incomes reveals, in some instances, other means of livelihood. Some of the laborers were sharecroppers who handle little cash in the course of a year's work; others had jobs that furnished them with perquisites and a small monthly cash allowance. These perquisites in addition to the cash wages were reported by both racial groups. The racial difference appears in the greater number of Negroes who apparently must live on the amount reported as wages. With few exceptions each schedule from a white laborer of the low-income group showed some other means of livelihood, such as living at the parental home or receiving sufficient perquisites to exist; but schedules from one-third of the low-income Negroes reveal no other apparent advantages of a similar nature. While means of subsistence are available for a large number of both Negroes and whites in the meager-income ranges, there is no opportunity for savings or advancement.

Table 7.- Total income, September 1935 - August 1936, of 290 agricultural laborers, Todd County, Kentucky

Total income	Number	Percent	Agricultural earnings			Nonagricultural earnings			Relief		
			By laborers	By dependents	Number	By laborers	By dependents	Number	Work	Number	Direct
			Average	Average	/1 : Average	Average	Average	/1 : Average	Number	Average	Number : Average
\$ 1 - 49	23	7.9	\$27.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 \$52.00
White	7	10.1	27.14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 24.00
Negro	16	7.2	26.94	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 80.00
50 - 99	35	12.1	64.50	2	\$28.00	3	\$27.00	2	\$11.00	1	1 75.00
White	7	10.1	62.50	1	26.00	1	6.00	-	-	-	-
Negro	28	12.6	64.56	1	30.00	2	37.50	2	11.00	1	1 75.00
100 - 149	37	12.8	98.97	3	41.67	3	46.67	5	38.00	3	70.33
White	10	14.5	81.50	1	25.00	1	75.00	1	50.00	2	93.50
Negro	27	12.2	105.44	2	50.00	2	32.50	4	35.00	1	24.00
150 - 199	64	22.1	162.19	1	128.00	2	19.50	9	27.00	1	63.00
White	13	18.9	155.92	-	-	1	25.00	-	-	-	-
Negro	51	23.1	163.82	1	128.00	1	14.00	9	27.00	1	63.00
200 - 249	65	22.4	190.36	2	61.50	8	104.00	23	42.39	1	200.00
White	13	18.9	195.54	-	-	3	91.67	-	-	-	13.00
Negro	52	23.5	189.04	2	61.50	5	111.40	23	42.39	1	200.00
250 - 299	33	11.4	218.73	5	51.00	4	111.00	10	51.40	1	210.00
White	10	14.5	217.50	1	15.00	3	65.33	-	-	1	210.00
Negro	23	10.4	219.26	4	60.00	1	248.00	10	51.40	-	-
300 - 349	12	4.1	227.91	1	80.00	3	200.00	3	93.33	-	-
White	6	8.7	202.40	-	-	2	275.00	-	-	-	-
Negro	6	2.7	249.17	1	80.00	1	50.00	3	93.33	-	-
350 - 399	7	2.4	320.71	1	200.00	-	-	1	100.00	-	-
White	-	-	320.71	1	200.00	-	-	1	100.00	-	-
Negro	7	3.2	320.71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
400 - 449	3	1.0	280.00	-	-	1	175.00	1	200.00	-	-
White	2	2.9	220.00	-	-	1	175.00	1	200.00	-	-
Negro	1	0.5	400.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
450 - 499	2	0.7	345.00	1	231.00	-	-	1	25.00	-	-
White	-	-	345.00	-	-	-	-	1	25.00	-	-
Negro	2	0.9	345.00	1	231.00	-	-	1	25.00	-	-
500 - 549	3	1.0	500.00	1	40.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	-	-	500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Negro	3	1.4	500.00	1	40.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
550 and over	6	2.1	441.00	2	240.50	-	-	3	226.33	-	-
White	1	1.4	700.00	1	25.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Negro	5	2.3	389.20	1	456.00	-	-	3	226.33	-	-
Totals and averages	290	100.0	162.67	19	90.47	24	96.29	58	55.66	7	106.29
White	69	100.0	153.37	4	22.75	12	108.50	2	125.00	4	114.25
Negro	221	100.0	165.93	15	108.53	12	84.08	56	53.18	3	95.67

1 Refers to number of laborers who had dependents earning, not to number of dependents working.

2 As high as \$725.

Little nonagricultural employment is available in the southern part of Todd County and few jobs were reported outside the fields. Almost without exception the workers reported that they had been agricultural laborers in August 1935 as well as in September 1936. Sixty-two Negroes had had more than one job during this period, but only 12 reported nonagricultural earnings; of the 20 white workers who had had more than the one job there were also 12 who listed income from nonagricultural sources.

The number of days worked during the year in the various types of employment is shown in Table 8. Not everyone who reported an income could give accurate information on this subject, particularly when the work had consisted of "odd jobs." This difficulty was encountered more frequently among the white workers than among the Negroes, for the Negroes showed steadier employment. More than one-half of the Negroes had over 10 months' employment -- that is, 270 days or more -- but only about two-fifths of the whites reported as much. There were not enough cases of mixed employment to draw conclusions, but nonagricultural work was usually incidental to agricultural work.

Relatively little property or savings were reported. An automobile was the most frequent item of value, but only 12 white workers and 41 Negroes possessed one. Six white laborers owned farm land averaging 39 acres each, and 3 had nonfarm real estate. Ten Negroes owned farm land averaging 22.7 acres, and 6 had nonfarm property. A small number of workers owned a few pigs, a cow, or a horse. Average bank accounts of \$175 and \$40 were reported by 4 whites, and 3 Negroes respectively. Eight whites carried insurance policies averaging \$708, and 99 Negroes had policies that averaged \$209. The many benefit and burial societies found among the Negroes probably account for the large number in this group reporting insurance. As a result of these meager resources and an attendant lack of mobility, the white workers as well as the Negroes of Todd County were largely dependent on the farmers who might need their services occasionally.

Wage Rates

Farm laborers in Todd County are generally paid time rates. None of the laborers were working on a piece basis, and only a few instances of such work were cited by the farm operators who were interviewed. Tobacco harvesting does not lend itself to piece work so well as some other hand-harvested crops do. Information regarding monthly and daily rates was obtained from both operators and laborers, weekly rates from the laborers only. Of the workers reporting, 128 were paid by the month, 125 by the day, and 34 by the week (Tables 9, 11, 13). There were noticeable racial differences in the basis of pay, a larger proportion of whites than of Negroes being paid on the short-time basis. Daily rates

Table 8.-- Days worked in 12 months in agricultural and other occupations by 246 1
white and Negro farm laborers, Todd County, Kentucky

Total days employed	Agricultural employment :			Mixed employment			Average days in		Average days in	
	:			:			:		:	
	Number	Negro	Total	Number	White	Negro	agricultural	nonagricultural	agricultural	nonagricultural
	Total	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
0 - 29	28	11	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30 - 59	11	2	9	2	2	-	16	-	32	-
60 - 89	7	3	4	2	1	1	1	4	86	56
90 - 119	10	3	7	1	-	1	-	84	-	24
120 - 149	9	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
150 - 179	11	1	10	1	-	1	-	36	-	126
180 - 209	12	3	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
210 - 239	8	2	6	1	-	1	-	184	-	50
240 - 269	4	-	4	1	1	-	208	-	60	-
270 - 312	134	21	113	4	2	2	166	296	134	13

Totals or
averages

234 47 187 12 6 6 95 150 80 47

1 Due to recurrence of the term "odd jobs," with days of work not clearly stated, many schedules could not be used in this table.

were reported by 58 percent of the white laborers as compared with 39 percent of the Negroes; conversely, 29 percent of the whites reported monthly payments as against 49 percent of the Negroes. The longer tenure of the Negro worker probably accounts for these differences. Averages of the rates reported by operators (Tables 10 and 12) were generally slightly higher than similar averages of the rates reported by laborers.

Table 9.- Monthly wage rates with specified perquisites received as reported by 128 agricultural laborers, by race, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Wage rate	White					Negro			
	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Total:	Without:	With:	With:	Total:	Without:	With:	With:	
		board	board	house		board	board	house	
\$10.00	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	
12.00	-	-	-	-	3	-	2	2	/1
12.50	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	
13.00	1	-	1	-	6	-	4	5	/1
13.50	-	-	-	-	4	1	2	3	/1
14.00	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	2	
14.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	/1
15.00	2	1	-	1	25	4	10	16	/1
15.75	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	/1
16.00	-	-	-	-	8	2	2	6	/1
17.00	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	3	
17.50	-	-	-	-	5	-	1	5	/1
18.00	3	1	-	2	11	2	2	7	
18.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
19.00	1	-	-	1	8	1	1	7	/1
19.50	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	
20.00	7	-	1	6	13	2	1	10	
20.40	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	
21.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	
21.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	/1
22.10	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	
22.50	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	
23.00	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	
25.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	
26.00	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	
27.50	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
30.00	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	/1

Totals 19 3 4 12 109 17 15 77

Averages \$19.00 \$18.50 \$14.50 \$20.63 \$16.96 \$18.18 \$15.00/2 \$17.07

/1 Some report both board and house and are included in both columns but excluded from a double count in both horizontal and vertical columns; they are included only in "with house" totals.

/2 Fifteen dollars is the average for those with board only; for those receiving both board and a house it is \$15.96.

Table 10.- Monthly wage rates paid to white and Negro hired farm laborers as reported by farm operators, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Wage rate	White				Negro			
	Total	Without board	With board	With house	Total	Without board	With board	With house
\$ 6.00	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
8.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
10.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
13.00	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
13.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
14.00	-	-	-	-	4	-	3	1
15.00	2	-	1	1	12	-	4	8
15.50	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
16.00	1	-	-	1	10	1	2	7
17.00	1	-	-	1	5 <u>/1</u>	-	1	4 <u>/1</u>
17.50	1	1	-	-	4	1	-	3
18.00	4	1	-	3	7	2	1	4
19.00	-	-	-	-	5	1	1	3
19.50	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
20.00	4	-	1	3	9	2	2	5
22.00	2	-	1	1	2 <u>/2</u>	2 <u>/2</u>	-	-
23.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
25.00	2	-	-	2	3	1	-	2
26.00	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
27.50	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
30.00	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Totals	22	3	5	14	69	11	15	43
Averages	\$19.80	\$20.50	\$16.50	\$20.82	\$17.11	\$19.37	\$15.87	\$16.96

/1 One rate at \$17.20 included here.

/2 One rate at \$22.10 included here.

Table 11.- Daily wage rates and perquisites reported by 125 agricultural laborers, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Wage rate	White				Negro			
	Total	Without board	With board	With house	Total	Without board	With board	With house
\$.30	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
.50	3	1	2	-	6	1	4	1
.60	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	2
.70	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
.75	14	3	5	6	36	16	10 <u>/1/2</u>	11 <u>/2</u>
.80	1	1 <u>/3</u>	-	-	1	-	-	1
.85	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
.90	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-
.95	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
1.00	9	4	4	1	21	12	4	5
1.25	7	4	3	-	10	9	1	-
1.50	2	2	-	-	2	2	-	-
2.00	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
2.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
2.75	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	38	15	15	8	87	41	23	23
Averages	\$1.01	\$1.04	\$1.02	\$.94	\$.88	\$.97	\$.77	\$.85

/1 Includes 1 at \$.77.

/2 One reporting both board and house included in "with house" column total only.

/3 Includes 1 at \$.82.

Although the number of cases is not large, most averages that are reported by laborers or by the operators show lower wage rates for the Negroes than for the whites. The average reported by 4 whites receiving monthly pay with board was \$14.50, while for 15 Negroes it was \$15. In all other cases the Negro rates averaged from 2 to 36 percent less than those for the whites.

Operators' and laborers' reports on wages do not always agree. Exact agreement cannot be expected since an operator's report may cover 1 laborer or several, whereas each laborer gives information regarding his specific job. The differences between wage rates reported by the farm laborers and those reported by farm operators were most marked in the case of Negro laborers. Forty-four percent of the operators and 45 percent of the white laborers reported 75 cents a day or less; but only 28 percent of the operators gave this rate or less for Negro workers while 55 percent of the Negro laborers gave 75 cents a day or less as their rate of pay. This wide discrepancy may be due to an overstatement of wages on the part of the employers, an understatement on the part of the workers, the failure to report Negro workers, or the fact that each operator's report may cover several laborers. Those farm operators who reported low wages did not report hiring a greater number of laborers than others; consequently it cannot be assumed that the lower wages are paid on farms that employ larger numbers than the average.

Perquisites form a part of the value received for the work, but they apparently do not play an important part in determining actual wages. Average rates with board are slightly lower than those without, yet the value of board as determined from this difference is nominal. Average rates of those who had the use of a house vary little from other averages. Living quarters supplied by the operator may be meager shelters or they may be comfortable cabins. In either case the worker was saved the payment of rent. Almost without exception, other perquisites accompanied the house, some garden space usually being allotted. Supplies of pork, flour, or milk ranked next in importance. In only 12 cases were living quarters supplied without other perquisites and in a like number of cases these lesser perquisites were supplied to those not having a house.

A comparison of these average wage rates with those reported by the Federal Crop Reporting Service is given in Table 14. Since the rates gathered for this study deal only with Todd County it is not surprising that they do not agree with the State averages for Kentucky. The chief difference is the value placed on board. According to the Crop Reporting Service, board is valued at twice as much as in this survey.

Table 12.- Daily wage rates paid to white and Negro hired farm laborers as reported by farm operators, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Rate	White			Negro		
	Total	Without board	With board	Total	Without board	With board
\$.50	6	-	6	1	-	1
.55	1	1	-	-	-	-
.60	2	-	2	1	-	1
.65	-	-	-	1	-	1
.70	-	-	-	1	1	-
.75	9	1	8	9	3	6
.90	-	-	-	1	1	-
1.00	11	3	8	19	8	11
1.25	8	5	3	12	7	5
1.30	-	-	-	1	1	-
1.50	2	-	2	-	-	-
2.00	2	-	2	-	-	-
Totals	41	10	31	46	21	25
Averages	\$.96	\$1.05	\$.93	\$.99	\$1.04	\$.94

Table 13.- Weekly wage rates and perquisites reported by 34 agricultural laborers, by race, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Rate	White				Negro			
	Total	Without board	With board	With house	Total	Without board	With board	With house
\$.60	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
3.00	2	-	2	-	3	1	2	1 <u>/1</u>
3.60	1	-	1	-	2 <u>/2</u>	-	1 <u>/2</u>	1
3.75	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	3
4.00	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
4.50	2	-	1	1	7	2	-	5
5.00	1	-	-	1	3	1	-	2
6.00	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	1
7.50	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
9.00	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	9	1	6	2	25	6	3	16
Averages	\$5.29	\$7.50	\$5.10	\$4.75	\$4.18	\$4.83	\$3.48	\$4.06

/1 One, reporting both board and house, included in "with house" totals only.

/2 One reporting \$3.69.

Table 14.- Average wage rates of hired farm laborers for Kentucky and for Todd County, Kentucky, October 1936

Source of data	Per month		Per day	
	: Without board	: With board	: Without board	: With board
Federal Crop Reporting Service <u>/1</u>	\$25.50	\$17.75	\$1.15	\$.85
Operators' reports <u>/2</u>	19.61	16.02	1.05	.94
Laborers' reports <u>/2</u>	18.23	15.43	.97	.89

/1 Federal Crop Reporting Service, October 1, 1936. The figures are based on reports of farm operators who regularly report labor among other items. This line represents the Kentucky average.

/2 Operators and laborers were interviewed in Todd County during September and October 1936.

Examination of Tables 9 to 13 suggests caution in using these averages, however, for wage rates vary greatly and tend to concentrate on round numbers rather than at a central figure. Evaluation of the individual's worth to his employer and the perquisites he is to receive is more or less an individual process vaguely related to a "prevailing wage."

Tenure of Employment

Negroes showed a longer tenure of employment than whites (Table 15). In Todd County the interval elapsing since the job was obtained cannot always be interpreted as representing continuous employment, for it is not uncommon for a man to be allowed to live on the operator's property subject to call for labor when needed; and the laborer may have reported that he had obtained his employment on the date when that arrangement began. Even considering this possibility, the tenure of the Negro employment is markedly longer than that of whites. Over half the Negroes had secured their jobs by January 1936; on the other hand it was May before half the whites had become established. Forty-seven percent of the latter had obtained jobs as recently as August and September as contrasted to 25 percent of the Negroes.

Table 15.- Date of beginning of jobs of 73 white and 223 Negro hired farm laborers, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Date of beginning	White		Negro	
	Number	Cumulative percent	Number	Cumulative percent
Previous to 1930	4	5.5	29	13.0
1930	2	8.2	1	13.5
1931	2	11.0	6	16.1
1932	1	12.3	8	19.7
1933	1	13.7	6	22.4
1934	3	17.8	14	28.7
1935 January	3	21.9	11	33.6
February	1	23.3	1	34.1
March	-	23.3	-	34.1
April	-	23.3	1	34.5
May	-	23.3	3	35.9
June	-	23.3	4	37.7
July	1	24.7	2	38.6
August	1	26.0	-	38.6
September	3	30.1	3	39.9
October	1	31.5	5	42.2
November	-	31.5	1	42.6
December	2	34.2	11	47.5
1936 January	7	43.8	20	56.5
February	1	45.2	3	57.8
March	1	46.6	13	63.7
April	1	47.9	5	65.9
May	1	49.3	4	67.7
June	1	50.7	8	71.3
July	2	53.4	11	76.2
August	23	84.9	43	95.5
September	11	100.0	10	100.0

The laborer population has moved about very little, but employment conditions are not stable. On the farms visited the average number of employees at that time was 3.0, but the operators reported an average of 5.9 at the busiest season of the year and of 1.7 for the slack period. At the period of least employment it was only 29 percent of the peak demand. Harvest labor is employed for 1 to 4 weeks; few laborers are employed only for the crop season; year-around labor predominates. Because of the short harvest period, when the demand for labor reaches its peak, the enumerators were able to visit only a few farms during the time of maximum employment. The operators may have been inclined to report the largest number ever employed, which would total considerably higher than an average peak period.

Placement of labor is chiefly done on a direct basis (Table 16). A few were told of their jobs by friends and 5 Negroes were sent by relief agencies, but usually either the laborer asked the farmer directly or vice versa. Informants were inclined to emphasize their own part in the placement. Among the laborers 71 percent said they themselves sought the job held at the time of interview and less than 10 percent gave the operator credit for seeking them. On the other hand, slightly more than one-half of the employers reported that they had had to seek their employees.

Table 16.- Method of placement of farm laborers, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1936

Method	Laborers' reports /1						Operators'	
	Total		White		Negro		reports	
	Num-	Per-	Num-	Per-	Num-	Per-	Num-	Per-
	ber	cent	ber	cent	ber	cent	ber	cent/2
Laborers' search	210	71.2	49	68.1	161	72.2	66	62.9
Through a friend	45	15.3	15	20.8	30	13.5	-	-
Sought by employer	27	9.1	5	6.9	22	9.9	74	70.5
Through relief agency	5	1.7	-	-	5	2.2	-	-
Advertised for it	1	.3	1	1.4	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	7	2.4	2	2.8	5	2.2	1	1.0

/1 Reports by 295 laborers.

/2 Percent of 105 employers reporting a given method used in 1936. One operator may report more than 1 method, hence this column does not necessarily total 100 percent.

Community Participation

The laborer's place in the community is not easily defined, but a few indications were found. The formal organization of farmers obviously does not reach down into the laborer group. One white worker was a member of the Farm Bureau of Todd County; 3 whites and 7 Negroes had been members of a cooperative. One Negro said that he had been asked to join a tobacco pool, a farmers' organization, and for this reason had quit sharecropping. Since he couldn't understand the set-up and hated to sign papers, he eliminated himself from the operator class.

Practically all these workers had informal community contacts (Table 17). Nearly everyone went to town to shop once or twice a month. In other activities racial differences appear. A higher percentage of Negroes attended religious services with greater frequency than whites, but the reverse is true with the movies or circuses. Proximity to town

or availability of transportation might also be factors. "Court day" in Todd County, which attracted 32 percent of the whites and 20 percent of the Negroes at one time or another during the year, means the meeting of the County Magistrates, a general day of county business, not necessarily judicial. It has also become a market day, especially a day for horse trading.

Farm-practice demonstrations and farmers' institutes were not a part of the activity of many of the laborers. Where race segregation is likely to occur within groups, Negro participation was less than that of the whites, but where each had its group, as in the case of churches, the Negroes showed a more active interest than the whites.

Table 17.- Community participation of 73 white and 223 Negro agricultural laborers, Todd County, Kentucky, September 1935 - September 1936

Activity	White			Negro		
	:	:	:Average	:	:	:Average
	: Number	:Percent:	times	: Number	:Percent:	times
	:reporting:		:reported	:reporting:		:reported
Shopping	71	97.3	37.4	213	95.5	39.2
Religious meetings	58	79.5	22.5	206	92.4	24.4
Community entertainment	24	32.9	10.5	135	60.5	3.7
Ball games	24	32.9	8.1	100	44.8	6.3
Overnight visits	32	43.8	10.2	56	25.1	11.8
Court day	23	31.5	3.1	45	20.2	2.8
Movies	34	46.6	14.4	42	18.8	11.2
Circus	18	24.7	1.6	27	12.1	1.4
Fishing trips	4	5.5	4.8	1	.4	7.0
Farm-practice demonstrations	9	12.3	4.0	1	.4	1.0
Farmers' institutes	1	1.4	2.0	-	-	-

In summary, Todd County approximates the plantation pattern. Its agricultural labor population is drawn from local sources. Much of it lives in shacks or cabins on the large farms. Some of these workers remain as sharecroppers and work out, and occasionally others live on the farm subject to call as day laborers, and still others have fairly steady work. Negroes outnumber the whites two or three to one

in the fields; women of either race do not appear to do wage labor. Unless low annual incomes are supplemented by substantial payments in kind they force the workers to a very low level of living. Low wage rates and intermittent employment prevent material advancement. This group constitutes a low economic class that does not participate in the active management of community affairs but finds itself restricted to informal contacts through shopping, attending movies, or going to church, with racial differences appearing in these activities. Lack of mobility and appreciable opportunity for advancement restricts these laborers to the status granted them by the wishes and economic abilities of the farm operators of the county.

Table 10 - Community participation of 13 white and 22 Negro girls
and their families, Todd County, Kentucky, September
1938 - September 1939

Activity	Number reporting	Percentage reported	Number reporting	Percentage reported	Average times reported
Shopping	71	97.3	27.4	95.2	27.2
Religious meetings	59	79.5	22.5	92.4	24.2
Community enter- tainment	34	32.9	10.5	60.8	2.7
Ball games	34	52.9	8.7	44.9	6.0
Overnight visits	32	43.8	10.2	23.1	11.8
Court day	25	31.5	3.7	20.2	2.8
Movies	34	45.8	14.4	19.8	11.2
Circus	18	24.7	1.8	12.1	1.4
Fishing trips	4	5.3	4.8	4	7.0
Fair-grounds demonstrations	9	12.3	4.0	4	4.0
Farmers' in- formation	1	1.4	5.0	-	-

In summary Todd County approximates the plantation pattern. Its agricultural labor population is drawn from local sources. Those who live in towns or cities on the farm have some of these contacts as shopkeepers and work out, and occasionally some live in the town subject to call as the seasons and soil demand. The Negroes clustered the whites and of these the

